

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

For sheer joy you can scarcely match the experience of St. Francis of Assisi. He enjoyed God and he enjoyed people. He was so grateful to God for his conversion and transformation that he never ceased from giving praise. He lived on this earth only forty-four years, from 1182 to 1226, but from the moment of his awakening to the drawing of his last breath, his words and his deeds were a continuing stream of thanksgiving.

Francis loved people, all kinds of people. He loved people with self-giving concern for them and with radiant satisfaction at being with them. His tender care of lepers fills one with awe at such deep compassion. Every beggar he recognized as a holy temple of God, worthy to be treated with respect and reverence. He really loved his enemies, even ^{when} they abused him and pelted him with stones.

His love of nature has rarely been equaled. He entered into companionship with the birds and talked with them as with other friends. He gloried in flowers and in the moon and in the sun. Everywhere he found evidence of the outreaching, immeasurable love of God.

His life is a glowing illustration of the truth later expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Let me go where'er I will I hear a sky-born music still. It sounds from all things old, it sounds from all things young, from all that's fair, from all that's foul, peals out a cheerful song... In the darkest, meanest things, there always, always something sings."

Because Francis enjoyed God and nature and people, he was extraordinarily free from selfishness. He was a genius of the spirit, a God-intoxicated troubadour, and one of the most Christlike of all followers of our Lord.

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Abraham Lincoln had the reputation of being the best storyteller of his day. He was never at a loss for an appropriate anecdote and was always ready with a joke. One reason is found in the fact that by nature he was sad and melancholy, and with him humor was a means of release and relaxation.

Once at the Hotel Astor where the bill of fare was printed in French, Lincoln without hesitation called for a sine qua non of beans and an ipsedixit of pork. Concerning a voluminous paper submitted to him, he said: "It's like the lazy preacher that used to write long sermons, and the explanation was, he got to writin' and was too lazy to stop."

He once told of the preacher who in a sermon asserted that while our Savior was the only perfect man, there is no record of a perfect woman. Whereupon he was interrupted, "I know a perfect woman." "Who was she?" asked the minister. "My husband's first wife," came the reply. Lincoln once illustrated a point by reference to a boy who was riding a horse for sale and when asked if the horse had splinters answered: "Well, mister, if it's good for him he has got it, but if ain't good for him he hasn't."

An experience reminded him of the member of a delegation visiting the state penitentiary who got separated from his party and could not find his way out. Seeing a convict in a cell, he asked the prisoner, "Say! How do you get out of this place?"

The burden of his office sometimes seemed unbearable. Lincoln felt as though "history had ordered him to straddle a cyclone and ride it if he could." He once told a general: "If to be the head of Hell is as hard as what I have to undergo here, I could find it in my heart to pity Satan himself." When reproached because he told a funny story in a time of serious crisis, the President replied: "If I couldn't tell these stories, I would die."

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God was more real to Jesus than Simon Peter was real. He was perfectly at home in the invisible world of the spirit. The visible world is real but limited, while the invisible world is equally real and infinitely more extended. The human body is visible, but the human soul is invisible. The observer, the participant who lives in your physical frame has never been seen.

No one ever saw an idea, an ideal, an aspiration. It is not possible to see memory or anticipation or remorse. A sense of duty may be experienced, but not seen. Faith and hope and love are the greatest things in the world, but they are invisible.

God is real, but cannot be seen with the physical eye. But the soul has eyes. The human spirit can come to know the Divine Spirit. God is alive, self-conscious. He things, he feels, he decides, he acts, he communicates. The human soul is created in the image of God and is equipped with every capacity required for interchange with the Eternal Spirit.

Jesus was perfectly at home in the invisible world of the spirit, and he challenged his disciples to enter into this experience. He got up a great while before day and went apart to enjoy God. Sometimes he stayed in prayer through the long night. With eyes for the invisible and ears for the inaudible, he walked with God, listened to him, unburdened himself to his Father.

There are many interpretations of the nature of Jesus Christ and of his relationship to God. But all of us can agree that to him God was more real than any other reality. He was positive about the presence of God, was sure of his wisdom and love and power. He knew that the most radiant human joy comes from knowing God and doing his holy will.

G O D ' S , L I V I N G L E T T E R S

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Who was the greatest American woman? The name most frequently found on numerous lists is that of Jane Addams of Hull House. What made her great was her capacity for friendship, the degree to which she poured her life into other people, the improvement in living conditions she was able to achieve, and the worldwide influence she wielded through her articles, books and public addresses.

In 1889 she moved into the old Hull House on South Halstead street in Chicago in order to become a good neighbor to the immigrant families crowded into that section. She gathered about her a notable group of residents, including Julia Lathrop, Florence Kelley, Alice Hamilton, Edith Abbott, Grace Abbott. They went about the community doing good. They established the first public playground in Chicago and brought children into Hull House for all kinds of activities. They struggled for improved sanitary conditions, and Jane Addams for a time became official garbage inspector at a salary of \$1,000 per year from the city. An art school and a music school were established. A continuous campaign was conducted for protective legislation for women and children. Soon Miss Addams was looked upon as a radical. Some went so far as to say "she should be hanged to the nearest lamp-post."

She was active in the woman suffrage movement and the world peace movement. Her pacifist attitude during the First World War brought much opposition and public abuse. Many considered her a "menace" and a "traitor." In 1931, however, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Fourteen universities bestowed upon her honorary degrees and she was awarded numerous prizes for public service. Theodore Roosevelt called her "the most useful citizen," and a distinguished journalist said that "if Christ came to Chicago" he would stay at Hull House.

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John Wesley lived in every decade of a century. He was born in 1703 and died in 1791. He was one of the best educated men of his time and the author of many books. Few evangelists in all the centuries have matched his eloquence and power over masses of people. He was gifted with genius as an organizer and the worldwide Methodist Church is his enduring monument.

He was an itinerant preacher and travelled incessantly throughout England, and forty-two times he crossed the Irish Channel. He travelled on horseback in a day when there were few good roads, in heat and cold, in rain and snow. It was late in his life when friends provided him with a coach to make easier his travels. For a full half-century he preached on the average fifteen times per week. In all he travelled on land 250,000 miles, most of it on the back of a horse, an average of thirteen miles every day for fifty years.

His output as a writer reached incredible proportions. He read several languages and searched the literature of the ages for material to be used in the Christian Library, a work of fifty volumes, which he published. Much reading was done while walking or riding on his horse. It has been well said that he "made a wider distribution of religious writings dealing with the inner life" than any other man in the previous history of the Church.

All this prodigious activity came from a man small in stature and frail in health. Sixty-nine times in his Journal he records attacks of sickness.

President Woodrow Wilson once paid this tribute: "The Church was dead and Wesley awakened it. He cleared and purified it by speaking always and everywhere the word of God; and men's spirits responded, leaped at the message and were made wholesome as they comprehended".

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A slave became one of the world's greatest agricultural scientists. His mother was known simply as Mary and he never knew his father. He had no name of his own, so he was called by that of the man who owned his mother, old man Carver. In order to have a middle initial he used W, which he said might as well be for Washington. Thus he became known to the world as George Washington Carver.

Before his death in 1943 he had brought incalculable benefits to the farmers of the South through his discoveries, especially new uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, pecans. But he arrived at the pinnacle of distinction the hard way. In babyhood he had been kidnapped with his mother by slave-thieves. He was rescued but his mother was never heard of again. Emancipation had now come and the little black boy was free. Until he was ten he stayed on the old Carver place in Missouri. Then he wandered through Missouri, Kansas and Iowa, maintaining a meager existence and grasping every opportunity to acquire an education.

At twenty-six he was admitted to Simpson College and the next year transferred to Iowa State College in order to equip himself for service among his people in the South as an agricultural expert. He made a notable record as a student and upon graduation was appointed assistant in botany. Then in 1896 he went to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he remained throughout his distinguished career.

Success stories are common in the United States, but few of them can equal in dramatic appeal the record of this Negro boy, born of a slave mother, frail in health, acquainted with privation, struggling for an education, until he becomes one of the great benefactors of the human race.

GOD'S LIVING LETTERS***By Kirby Page

Many of the great men of history have spent time in jail. Long ago Jesus pointed out that one generation slays the prophets and another generation builds monuments in their honor.

In our own day, Mahatma Gandhi spent much time in jail. He was confined for 2,089 days in Indian prisons, and 249 days in South African jails--a total of more than six years behind the bars. He had no horror of imprisonment, no sense of being disgraced. On the contrary, he actually enjoyed prison life. On ~~the~~ one occasion when he was at liberty, he startled a friend by stopping in front of a high wall, stroking it as one does a horse, and exclaiming: "This is my favorite jail!"

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Mr. Gandhi's imprisonments came as the consequence of his efforts to win freedom for his people. He was opposed to violent revolution, but insistent that the British let his people go. His campaigns of non-violent, non-cooperation were based on these ideas:

1. When confronted with flagrant evildoing, never acquiesce or consent to it. Therefore, British rule of India must not be accepted, but resisted.
2. Never resist evil with evil. Therefore, do not take up arms against Britain. A new type of resistance must be substituted for revolutionary war.
3. Resist evil with good. Therefore, engage in non-violent non-cooperation with the alien government. At announced times refuse to pay taxes, resign government positions, and in other ways refuse to help the evildoers continue their evildoing.
4. Accept the consequences in a spirit of active goodwill.
5. Have faith in the power of sacrificial non-violence.

At one time more than 60,000 Indian patriots were in British prisons in their own land in their non-violent struggle for independence. And the fact is written into history that national freedom for India came without armed warfare.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

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The bravest man ever to live on earth - who was he? Many nominations for this distinction have been made. High on the list should be placed the name of Father Damien, the Belgian priest who gave his life as missionary to lepers on Molokai, one of the Hawaiian Islands.

Leprosy is an ancient and terrible scourge. The Egyptians called it "death before death". It has appeared in all centuries and on all continents. I have seen its victims in China, the Philippines and India. It literally eats away one part of the body after another and produces excruciating pain.

Leprosy was first noticed in the Hawaiian Islands in 1853. It spread rapidly and, in a desperate effort to check its ravages, the policy of segregating the lepers was adopted. The island of Molokai was selected for the leper colony.

In 1873 Father Damien arrived. He came with the knowledge that he was accepting a life sentence to service among these afflicted people. Leprosy is a contagious disease. He would never be allowed to dwell elsewhere, and at that time he was only thirty-three years of age.

Conditions were indescribably awful. The lepers numbered eight hundred and were in varying stages of decomposition. Some had lost a hand, some a foot, some had a deep pocket in the face in place of a nose. Sanitary conditions were deplorable. The stench rose to high heaven. Food was inadequate. Hopelessness and despair prevailed.

For twelve years Father Damien lived among these people as a minister of mercy. Then at an early Mass he spoke of "We lepers". He continued his work of compassion until his death in 1889, at the age of forty-nine. In the long annals of bravery, where would you find a more courageous soul than this man of God?

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It has been said that "music owes as great a debt to Bach as a religion does to its founder."

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Germany in 1685 and lived to the age of sixty-five. For seven generations the Bach family produced great musicians. Johann Sebastian was the father of twenty children, three of whom became famous. He was an accomplished violinist and organist, but his genius is revealed in his compositions. Sixty volumes of his works have been published. It has been said of his organ compositions that they are "unsurpassed and unsurpassable." Mendelssohn once remarked that if all the music written since Bach's day should be destroyed, it could be recreated on the foundation of these works alone.

Bach was a deeply religious man, a devout Lutheran. He thought of music as "making an agreeable harmony for the glory of God and the justifiable gratification of the soul." Albert Schweitzer writes: "Music is an act of worship with Bach. His artistic activity and his personality are both based on his piety. For him, art was religion, and so had no concern with the world or with wordly success. It was an end in itself. All great art, even secular, is in itself religious in his eyes; for him the tones do not perish, but ascend to God like praise too deep for utterance."

It is exhilarating to reflect upon the inconceivable contribution that Johann Sebastian Bach has made to the human race. For more than two centuries in home and church, cathedral and concert hall, countless multitudes have been exalted and impassioned by his music. And in the primeval forest of Africa, Albert Schweitzer plays on his equator-proof pedal-piano and feeds his soul on Bach.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

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Which historical figures have had the profoundest influence on the life of humanity? A distinguished scholar recently replied: Jesus and Socrates. "The greatest of the Greek philosophers," as he has been called, was born in 469 B. C. in Athens. His appearance was abnormally ugly. He was visionary in temperament and from childhood sought the company of great teachers. Throughout his life he persisted in asking questions. His mission was to convince men of their ignorance and to persuade them to seek the greatest good, the cultivation of their own souls. He had a deep concern for the unseen moral order and possessed a religious faith in God which was rare in that society. He believed in the immortality of the soul and was not afraid of death.

A disastrous war with Sparta brought Athens to ruin and internal strife. In this unsettled time the authorities denounced the activities of Socrates as subversive and brought him to trial before a court of five hundred citizens chosen by lot. He was charged with impiety and corrupting the minds of the youth of the city.

In his own defense, Socrates refused to accept acquittal at the price of giving up the search for wisdom and abandoning his mission. To the court he said: "Athenians, I hold you in much affection and esteem; but I will obey heaven rather than you, and, so long as breath and strength are in me, I will never cease from seeking wisdom or from exhorting you and pointing out the truth to any of you whom I may chance to meet ... You may acquit me or not; for I shall not change my ways, though I were to die a thousand deaths."

By a narrow vote he was condemned. He drank the bowl of poison hemlock and joined the immortals. His own generation executed him, but all subsequent generations have built monuments in his honor.

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Helen Keller is a continuing miracle. Stricken with total blindness and total deafness at nineteen months, she has become one of the best educated women of the day, a notable author, and, believe it or not, a public lecturer who has toured widely.

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Alabama. As a result of acute congestion of the stomach and brain, she lost sight and hearing. At the age of seven she was blessed with the coming of Anna Mansfield Sullivan to be her teacher and lifelong companion.

The sense of touch became her gateway into an ever expanding life. Miss Sullivan began spelling into her hand simple words. With infinite patience, hour after hour, day in and day out, this process of teaching went on. A new world opened when she was able to read Braille. She reads with her fingers instead of her eyes, and she listens with her fingers instead of her ears.

At the age of ten, Helen was taught to speak simple words and then short sentences. She tells of the method used: "She passed my hand lightly over her face, and let me feel the position of her tongue and lips when she made a sound. I was eager to imitate every motion and in an hour had learned the six elements of speech." Practice and correction, practice and correction continued until Helen was able to make herself understood in speech. Months and years of practice, practice, practice, enabled her to address public meetings.

Miss Keller spent four years at Radcliffe College and was graduated cum laude. Anne Sullivan attended classes with her, and spelled into her hand the lectures as they were given. Helen learned to read lips by placing her fingers lightly on the mouth of the one speaking. She reads French and German and English in Braille, and has devoured the literature of the ages. She has a profound religious experience and is at home in the invisible world of the spirit.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

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"The God-intoxicated Spinoza" was born in 1632 in Amsterdam, to Jewish refugees from Portugal. He became a pioneer advocate of man's right to freedom of thought and freedom of speech. His ethical and philosophical writings exercised deep and wide influence.

At the age of twenty-four, Baruch Spinoza was excommunicated by the local congregation, and disowned by his family. For the remaining twenty-four years of his life, he engaged in the pursuit of truth with a fidelity and single-mindedness rarely encountered. One biographer has written: "Among all men, Spinoza is the supreme example of complete dedication to the life of thought. Perception of pure truth with the reason was to him union with God and the highest blessedness."

He was a lens-grinder by trade. His days were spent in polishing glass and his evenings in arduous study and writing. His book The Theological Political Tract, in which he urged complete freedom of thought and speech, was banned by States-General. His great work The Ethics has been pronounced "one of the most extraordinary documents ever created by man." Twelve years of his life had been poured into it, "and now the whole thing stood there like a beautiful Greek temple." It was not published until after his death, so hostile were the authorities to his ideas.

He had long been afflicted with tuberculosis, and his malady was aggravated by constant exposure to finely powdered glass as he polished lenses. At the early age of forty-five this good and wise man died. He was almost unsurpassed in his zeal for the contemplative life, his utter unconcern about fame and fortune, his kindly attitude toward his opponents, his gentleness and humility, his fortitude as he saw death approaching. Shortly after his funeral the man who had been his barber spoke of him as "Mr. Spinoza of blessed memory."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

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"The Man With the Hoe" probably created a greater sensation upon publication than any other poem ever did. The first verse was written by Edwin Markham in 1886, but the poem was not completed until 1899. The idea came to him when he first saw a copy of Millet's famous painting. Thirteen years later, in an exhibit of paintings in San Francisco, he saw the original. It haunted him and gave him no release until the poem was finished.

All the verses were first read at a literary gathering in San Francisco. The editor of the San Francisco Examiner was present, and exclaimed: "That poem will go down through the centuries." It appeared in the middle of the editorial page of the Examiner on December 28, 1899. Immediately it produced a rage of controversy. For six solid months the San Francisco paper carried a page of letters from readers about the poem.

The discussion was picked up by newspapers throughout the nation and abroad. A prize of two thousand dollars was offered for the best answer to it. The answer was printed and quickly passed into oblivion, but the verses for which Edwin Markham received forty dollars will long survive. Cartoons and editorials without number were printed, and numerous sermons were preached on the poem. It is included in practically all anthologies of poetry.

"The Man With the Hoe" has been translated into forty different languages. Somebody counted twelve thousand reprints from magazines and newspapers. Five thousand answers to it are known. It has been chanted in song by millions of workers throughout the earth.

The third, fourth and fifth stanzas came to Edwin Markham at dawn on three successive mornings. Each morning he arose and wrote down the words without effort. It was said that "no other poem ever swung so swiftly into the mouths of men from sea to sea."

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To be a saint in character and a social reformer in activity were the achievements of John Woolman the Quaker. He was born in 1720 and died in 1772.

His Journal is a classic of devotional literature and has been a source of inspiration to thousands of readers for two centuries. He was successively clerk, tailor, teacher, farmer. Gentle was his spirit, and humble his nature. He was fond of solitude, and constantly felt the presence of God. The Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light was the foundation of his experience.

Because he saw "that of God in every man," he had respect and reverence for human personality. He therefore recoiled from every form of human degradation and exploitation. He was a friend of Indians, and sought to check the white man's deprivations upon them. He was one of the first to realize how seriously many workers were being exploited, and one of the earliest to plead for economic justice.

But it was to the movement for the freedom of slaves that John Woolman gave his fullest allegiance. His method was gentle persuasion of Quaker masters to free their slaves, rather than to denounce slave-owners as brutal and cruel. He became an itinerant lay preacher, making many long journeys by foot and on horseback through the wilderness as far south as Virginia and Carolina, visiting in the homes of Friends who held black men in bondage.

The effectiveness of his persuasion brought about one of the most amazing reforms in history. Within the Society of Friends, by his efforts and those who worked with him, chattel slavery was cast out. By 1784 the last of the Quarterly Meetings had taken action, no slaveholder could remain as a member of the Meeting. Thus ended slavery among the Quakers, three-quarters of a century before the Emancipation Proclamation.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

David Starr Jordan was one of America's great educators. He was the precise opposite of the scholar who withdraws to his ivory tower and lets the world go by unheeded. His multiple interests made him one of the busiest of men.

His life spanned the period 1851 to 1931. He was a stimulating and invigorating teacher. His record as President of Indiana University was outstanding. In 1891 he became the first President of Stanford University and remained as its head for a quarter of a century.

He was a scholar of renown and an author of note. He received the degree Doctor of Medicine, but never engaged in active practice. His researches as a natural scientist carried him far across the earth and into many seas. He achieved the difficult feat of climbing the Matterhorn in Switzerland. The seal industry and the salmon industry were the objects of special studies. He was an expert on fish and collaborated in producing a mammoth four-volume work giving descriptions of the 3,127 species of fishes known in America north of the Isthmus.

In his autobiography, Dr. Jordan refers to himself as "a minor prophet of democracy." He believed that one of the chief functions of a university is the training of citizens for effective participation in the processes of democratic living. He lectured far and wide before notable audiences. Many honorary degrees were bestowed upon him. He was elected as President of the National Education Association. For years he was active in the movement for world peace.

He was a deeply religious man. Near the end of his long and distinguished career, he wrote: "Wisdom is knowing what one ought to do next; virtue, doing it; religion, our conception of the reason why right action is better than wrong; and prayer, the core of our endeavor."

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One of the most famous of American merchants wanted to be a clergyman. John Wanamaker was born in 1838 and lived until 1922. He was the first employed secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of Philadelphia, and later was its president for thirteen years. He was a devoted Christian, active in Sunday School work and in the church. His eager desire to enter the ministry was frustrated by a throat ailment and consequent inability to make rugged use of his voice.

At the age of twenty-three, and just four days before the first shot of the Civil War was fired, he opened a store in Philadelphia, in partnership with his brother-in-law. Together they had four thousand dollars capital. John Wanamaker wanted to carry his religion into his business, with an ambition "to make trade a benefaction." He looked upon his business as a means of serving employees and customers.

In 1868 his partner died, and Wanamaker took over complete control. Success was rapid and phenomenal. One innovation after another was introduced. The one-price system was instituted, at a time when haggling was a universal custom in stores. Goods were sold at different prices to various purchasers, the rule being "to charge all the traffic would bear." Wanamaker's prices were plainly marked, and there was no deviation. When importuned to cut the price of a valuable shawl, he replied: "I would knock the end of the store out first."

Wanamaker was first in the practice of refunding money for returned merchandise which had been found unsatisfactory. His employees were paid in cash at regular periods. He was one of the first to establish a system of profit-sharing with his workers. He inaugurated the practice of delivering goods. In numerous ways he was a pioneer in considering business a form of public service.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Carnegie Hall in New York City was packed to overflowing. All of us were spellbound by the sheer loveliness of the voice coming from the stage. Then the applause was deafening and prolonged. Nearly thirty years later in Pasadena I was moved to tears and to exultation by that same incomparable voice.

The artist was Roland Hayes. He was the first Negro to achieve eminence as a concert singer. Race prejudice was deep and high. With difficulty did he find a competent teacher of voice. Finally he was accepted as a pupil by an operatic singer in Boston, on condition that the lessons be given in the teacher's home, in order not to embarrass the white pupils. When ready for a concert tour, he was unable to find a manager who would make arrangements for a Negro singer. He had to make his own engagements, and on tour had much trouble in finding hotels and restaurants which would accomodate him. Music critics were reluctant to accept a Negro as a serious artist.

His first high acclaim came while on concert tour in Europe. He gave a command performance before the King and Queen of England, and appeared before notable audiences in continental capitals. News of all this reached musical circles in the United States and it became easy to obtain professional management for his tours which became continuous ovations. His earnings reached the top figure of twelve thousand dollars for a single performance.

One columnist wrote: "Roland Hayes sang of Jesus, and it seemed to me that this was what religion ought to be...I saw a miracle in Town Hall. Half of the people were black and half were white and while the mood of the song held, they were all the same. They shared together the close silence. One emotion wrapped them. And at the end it was a single sob." Thus God blessed the black singer with a precious voice.

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The Jews have made an incomparable contribution to the life of humanity. It has been well said that "Israel's genius soared to heights never reached before, nor surpassed since. It may be said without exaggeration that in the whole history of human progress no other nation has made such a mighty contribution to, or exercised such a lasting influence on the thought of the world." And let it be remembered that Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, and the New Testament was written by Jews.

Twenty-seven hundred years ago an obscure herder of sheep on Judean hillsides dreamed and thought, spoke and wrote in ways that have profoundly affected the subsequent behavior of mankind. His manner of life and the message which he proclaimed brought a higher vision of God and a deeper understanding of man. Religion and ethics were swerved into new directions by his powerful impact.

The herdsman Amos of Tekoa was the first of the literary prophets of Israel, a succession of lonely men who achieved high rank among the creative and courageous spirits of history. He was from the south, but did his prophecy in the north. Outraged by the oppression and corruption, he thundered his message:

"Therefore because you trample upon the weak, and take from him exactions of grain, though you have built houses of hewn stone, you shall not dwell in them; though you have planted pleasant vineyards, you shall drink their wine. For I know that your transgressions are many, and your sins are countless... Take from me the noise of your songs, and to the melody of your lyres I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a perennial stream." (An American Translation)

As long as literature is printed, these words will be preserved. Our debt to Amos is beyond repayment.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

One of the glories of human nature is willingness to undergo much privation and to endure much pain for the sake of others. In Japan there lives a man who illustrates this attitude in superlative degree.

Toychiko Kagawa was born in 1888. His father was a politician of cabinet rank and his mother was a concubine. He became an orphan at four and had an unhappy childhood. He was sent away to school and came in contact with Christian missionaries. He joined the church and later entered college and theological seminary. He contracted tuberculosis and was told that he had only a year to live. Deciding to make the most of the few remaining months, he moved into a shack in the slums of Kobe. There he was to spend more than fourteen years in a ministry of compassion.

At that time the slums of Japanese cities were indescribably horrible places in which to live. Sanitary conditions were vile. Privacy was impossible. Crime and prostitution were rampant. Life was cheap.

Kagawa found an abandoned hut six by six which was shunned because it was thought to be tenanted by the ghost of a murdered man. To this tiny abode he would bring derelicts of the streets. He shared his mat on the first night with a victim of contagious itch. He took in drunkards, gamblers, murderers. He visited the sick, comforted the sorrowing, taught the children. Later he organized a settlement house, founded cooperative societies, promoted the organization of labor unions. He became the foremost evangelist of the land and a widely read author.

His health has been wretched. He can barely see to get about. He has been stricken with plague, cholera, smallpox, dysentery, typhus. His body bears the marks of his ministry of mercy.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

For his creations in plant life, Luther Burbank came to be one of the ten most famous men on earth. He began as a boy with the production of a new and vastly improved potato. In the garden he found a potato seed-ball, a rarely encountered phenomenon. He planted its twenty seeds and from their vines came one "so vastly better that it was practically a new vegetable."

This original Burbank potato is the parent of practically all the improved varieties now being planted. It has been estimated that the increased yield because of this improvement has added more than a billion dollars to the wealth of the world.

"Luther Burbank's Plant Contributions" is the title of a bulletin published by the University of California. One hundred and ten pages of fine print are filled with a list and brief descriptions of his creations. He introduced more than two hundred varieties of fruits: apples, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, fruiting cacti, cherries, figs, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, plumcots, prunes, quinces, almonds, chestnuts, walnuts. In California alone there are two million plum trees which came from his stock. His fruits, vegetables and flowers are now being grown in literally every corner of the earth.

Luther Burbank was born in 1849 and died in 1926. In 1877 he moved from Massachusetts to Santa Rosa, California, where he resided to the end of his life. His first big success came when he filled a hurry-up order for twenty thousand prune trees by planting thirty thousand almond stones, because of swift growth. Six months later he placed French prune buds on the almond seedling stock. His long period of creative work was confined to a four-acre nursery and a sixteen-acre farm. Through an understanding of nature's laws and by faithful cooperation, Luther Burbank became a veritable creator of new plant life.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The misery of an empty life and the longing for work drove Florence Nightingale forward until she became one of the most useful women of all time.

She was born in 1820 and lived for ninety years. She was reared in a home of wealth, privilege and social standing. Young women in her class lived shallow and frivolous lives. Florence was a deeply religious girl. Her diary is filled with the record of her desire to live a holy life. At thirty she wrote: "Now, Lord, let me think only of Thy will."

She confronted a high wall of opposition to her proposal that she devote herself to the nursing of the sick. In that day nurses were looked upon as menial servants on the same level with scrub-women. She persisted in her determination and began visiting hospitals. Then she studied nursing in England and in Germany. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 opened before her unlimited opportunities to respond to her passion of mercy and to use her great gifts as an administrator. She established a new type of war hospital and cut in half the death rate of the wounded.

Miss Nightingale was utterly indifferent to contagion and personally ministered to patients afflicted with the Crimean fever. After six months she herself contracted the dread disease and was brought near to the point of death. Her health was broken and she remained an invalid for the remainder of her long life.

Throughout the earth she came to be known as "The Lady With the Lamp," because of her midnight rounds of the cots of the wounded. One soldier wrote that after she passed by "it was holy as a church." When news of her illness came: "Soldiers turned their faces to the wall and cried." It was said that Florence Nightingale helped men to understand the saints of the Middle Ages.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

-BY KIRBY PAGE

He was standing by the side of the lake when I first saw him. Tall, erect, with full beard, dressed in a long flowing saffron robe, he reminded us of the Christ of Galilee as he spoke. We were at Silver Bay on Lake George in New York, and the man from India was Sadhu Sundar Singh.

He was born in North India in 1889, and disappeared in Tibet in 1929, never to be seen again by his friends. His father was a man of considerable wealth, and his mother was exceedingly devout. His people were adherents of the Sikh religion. At the age of fourteen, Sundar was plunged into depression by the death of his mother. As he was contemplating suicide, he had an unforgettable spiritual experience which turned him to Christ. Two years later, he began the life of a Christian sadhu, that is, an itinerant evangelist, penniless and homeless.

Two traits in his character were outstanding, his fidelity and his joy. Literally he took up his cross and followed wherever he felt led. He faced strong opposition from his relatives and old friends. Burning with desire to share his spiritual experience, he toured the country as an ardent evangelist. Later he went to England and to the United States.

He was especially eager to enter forbidden Tibet with his message. Year after year he made the attempt, facing extreme forms of persecution from the religious authorities there, and enduring severe hardships from cold and exposure. From one of the journeys he never returned.

Sandhu Sundar Singh uttered no word of complaint. So real was his spiritual experience that the peace of God possessed his soul. One close friend said that "in his inner spirit there was a radiant joy which shone in every look and deed," and at times he was filled with sheer rapture. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

He was a hunch-backed, dwarfish man, with a frail body, but he possessed one of the profoundest mathematical minds of all the centuries. He came to be known the world over as "The Wizard of Schenectady." Charles P. Steinmetz was born in 1865 in Germany of German-Polish parents. He died in 1923.

As a student in the gymnasium and at the University of Breslau, his record was brilliant. At that time Bismarck was ruling Germany with an iron hand. Steinmetz had joined a socialist group at the university, and his arrest was ordered by the police. He escaped to Switzerland, where he spent a year in further scientific studies.

A friend in Zurich paid his steerage passage to America, and he landed in New York in 1889, literally penniless, speaking only a few sentences of English. In seeking employment, he was fortunate in meeting a manufacturer in Yonkers who conversed with him in German and gave him a job at twelve dollars per week. This firm was bought by The General Electric Company, in whose employ Steinmetz continued to the end of his life.

His life was that of a thinker. He was a genius in electrical theory and research. His original contributions proved to be of incalculable value in the field of electrical engineering. When he was given an honorary degree by Harvard University, President Eliot referred to him as "the foremost electrical engineer in the United States, and therefore the world."

Dr. Steinmetz was intensely gregarious. He loved people, especially children. The love of money had no hold upon his life. He served for ten years as a professor at Union College without a cent of salary. After his death, The Christian Century said that his attitude toward wealth "sounds almost like the revolutionary proposals that a crowd of peasants, sitting on a Galilean hillside, heard one day."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

That women should keep quiet in the church was the conviction of St. Paul. It is difficult for us today to realize the extent to which women have been subservient to men throughout history. Perhaps no other individual helped so greatly to change this relationship in the United States as did Susan B. Anthony.

For more than fifty years this consecrated Quaker lady was the very soul of the movement for equal rights for women. She never married and the struggle to emancipate women from men's domination took the place in her life of wifehood, motherhood, recreation, leisure. She spoke incessantly throughout the land. She wrote numerous articles for the press and carried on a voluminous correspondence with her pen, never owning a typewriter or employing a secretary until near the end of her long career. For half a century she was the organizer and director of the woman suffrage campaign. She laid siege to Congress and for forty years appeared annually before its committees.

Miss Anthony and her fellow suffragists were subjected to an almost unparalleled degree of abuse and villification. Year after year insulting epithets of the most extreme nature were hurled at them from coast to coast. In 1871 a Seattle editor wrote concerning Miss Anthony: "She is a revolutionist, aiming at nothing less than the breaking up of the very foundations of society, and the overthrow of every social institution organized for the protection of the sanctity of the altar, the family circle and the legitimacy of our off-spring...The whole plan is coarse, sensual and agrarian, the worst phase of French infidelity and communism."

All this vividly reminds us of the extreme difficulty of bringing about basic changes in public attitudes and in social institutions. With a great price has every advance in human wellbeing been bought.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The doctor with the largest practice in the world was the way Wilfred T. Grenfell was described. For years he cruised the waters of Labrador in a hospital ship as an angel of mercy to the fishermen.

He was born in 1865 in England. An experience in an evangelistic meeting conducted by Moody and Sankey quickened his religious life and turned him in the direction of missionary work. He was an outstanding athlete and a lover of the sea. After an exploratory cruise in the northwest Atlantic, he decided in 1892 to settle in Labrador, rather than to establish himself in medical practice in England.

Labrador is an ice-bound, snow-bound land, chilled to a temperature of thirty degrees below zero by the Arctic stream flowing from the north. At that time there were only nine thousand white people as regular residents, and six thousand Indians and Eskimos. During the summer season twenty thousand fishermen thronged the waters which abounded with fish and whales.

In the beginning Dr. Grenfell found the people in wretched condition. Food was insufficient and inadequate. Prices were exorbitant. Debt was almost universal and interest rates were consuming. Disease was rampant and there was no other regularly stationed doctor in all that vast region. Travel was by dog-sled, reindeer and boat.

For forty years the athletic, sea-loving doctor went the rounds in his unequalled parish. He visited the sick, cruised among the fishing boats in his hospital ship, built hospitals, founded co-operative stores and credit unions, established orphanages and schools, and preached the gospel of the carpenter of Nazareth. The doctor spoke of himself as "a humble competitor in the race of life pledged to the utmost of his ability to carry the colours of the Christian theory into practice." He said that his work was "an unmitigated delight."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The inventions of God was the way John Muir described the wonders of nature. His own love of mountains and streams and forests was the very passion of his life. As a naturalist and explorer and writer, he stands in the forefront of the men who have helped to conserve our national resources. To him as much as to any other individual we are indebted for our present magnificent system of national parks.

John Muir was born in Scotland in 1838 and died in 1914. When he was eleven his family moved to Wisconsin. In 1867 he began a walking tour which carried him a thousand miles to the Gulf. He was an acute observer and kept a detailed diary of what he saw. The next year he went to Yosemite and began what was really his lifework. Tall, robust, sure-footed, he wandered for weeks alone in the primitive country. Grandeur and loveliness fed his soul. His bodily needs were few and easily met. He was blessed with robust health and rejoiced in constant exposure to the elements. He came to know the wilderness with an intimacy and appreciativeness rarely equaled.

He learned to his surprise that he could write. Records of his experiences were eagerly sought by leading newspapers and periodicals. This provided him with a source of income, and with a public to whom he made constant appeals for governmental action in conserving our priceless heritage. In 1890 Yosemite National Park was established by the Federal Government. Today there are twenty-seven national parks, covering 17,000 square miles. There are also eighty-six national monuments, the largest one embracing more than two million acres in Alaska. The annual attendance exceeds sixteen million persons. The primitive glory of America is being preserved in these sanctuaries, and there men worship God in the holiness of beauty.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Both sides of our Civil War wanted the same soldier to command their armies. On the eve of the conflict, Robert E. Lee was almost universally looked upon as the greatest military strategist of the nation. President Lincoln offered to him the field command of the United States Army. This offer was declined, and Lee instead became commanding general of the Confederate forces.

The sublime greatness of Robert E. Lee rests upon the character of the man, rather than upon his military achievements. He came from a long line of distinguished ancestors, and grew up as a child in the home of one of the leading families of Virginia. On both sides, his grandparents and parents were slaveowners. The man himself loathed slavery, and said that it was "a greater evil to the white than to the black race." He set free the slaves which he had inherited.

General Lee was devoted to the Union, but was even more attached to Virginia. He did not believe in secession, but resigned his army commission when that act was taken by his beloved state, saying: "I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home."

He fought without bitterness and with no words of denunciation of the enemy. His wife recorded the fact that "he wept tears of blood." And when honors were heaped upon him, she said: "No honor can reconcile him to this fratricidal war." In the hour of defeat, the General bore himself with dignity and high courage.

When the fighting ceased, he became the mightiest force for reconciliation in all the South. He deplored all mourning over "a lost cause," and urged his people to heal the wounds of bitterness and hatred, and set themselves to the task of rebuilding. His own magnanimity and forgiving spirit loomed as an example for all.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

He lived for eighty-five eventful years. It was said of him that "he was of the tradition of Isaiah and Amos and Micah," and his resemblance to Abraham Lincoln was often pointed out.

Louis Dembitz Brandeis was born in 1856 in Louisville, Kentucky, of Jewish immigrants from Bohemia. At the age of twenty-one, he received the degree Bachelor of Law from Harvard University. He then began a distinguished career as "the people's attorney." His legal practice was so successful and his family life so simple that he was able to offer his services without payment in many celebrated cases involving the public interest. He was counsel for the state to prove constitutional the women's ten-hour laws in Oregon and Illinois, the California eight-hour law, the Ohio nine-hour law, the Oregon minimum wage law, and many other cases involving social legislation.

He was an advocate of controlled capitalism. Throughout his career he opposed the trend toward monopoly. His mastery of the facts of American economic life was not exceeded by any other legal mind in the country. No eminent jurist ever recognized more thoroughly the intimate and intricate relationships of economics to politics. His life struggle was to help achieve economic freedom for the common people of this nation.

President Wilson in 1916 appointed Louis D. Brandeis to the Supreme Court of the United States. For twenty-five years on that body his opinions and decisions helped to create legal history. At the end he had achieved a place as one of a half-dozen greatest members of the Supreme Court in a century and a half. But the fact should be remembered that a storm of abuse and opposition broke about President Wilson when he submitted the name of Brandeis for this high responsibility. For three months the Judiciary Committee listened to a steady stream of attacks upon the nominee. He was then confirmed and took his place on the Court as one of its most illustrious members.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

That the darkest hour may come just before dawn is illustrated in the life of George Frederick Handel, one of the greatest musicians of all time. At the age of fifty-six, he announced in despair that his last concert would be given on April 8, 1741. Twenty weeks later he began composing "The Messiah," and completed it during the period August 22-September 14.

Handel was a German who became a naturalized citizen of England. He was born in 1685 and died in 1759. His father was a barber-surgeon who served with various armies. He had nothing but contempt for music, and endeavored to prevent George Frederick from becoming a musician. Secretly the boy practiced. He was such a natural prodigy that a prince prevailed upon his father to permit him to study under a master musician.

His first opera was produced at the age of twenty, and by 1741 he had composed more than forty operas. He came to London at the age of twenty-five, and became naturalized in 1726. During 1737 his theater closed its doors, bankrupt, and he was smitten with temporary paralysis. His creditors seized him and he was threatened with imprisonment. Only the disgrace of a public benefit performance in his behalf kept him from prison.

In desperation, Handel accepted an invitation to give a series of concerts in Ireland. There he was received with enthusiasm. On April 12, 1742, the first performance of "The Messiah" took place. Nine years later he was stricken with blindness. He continued to give concerts, but in 1759 his powers failed him in the middle of a movement. He expressed a hope that he might die on Good Friday. His wish was fulfilled, and on Holy Saturday he passed into the beyond, leaving behind him an imperishable legacy of immortal music.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

-BY KIRBY PAGE

Why did Jesus view with such compassion the people about him, and why did he devote his energies to a ministry of loving kindness? The answer is clear. He saw through the eyes of God, and recognized people.

From childhood Jesus was familiar with the idea that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. He was taught that God is Father of his people, and from intimate and sustained experience in prayer he came to know God as a loving parent, compassionately concerned about each individual, infinitely eager to send showers of blessings upon his children.

Jesus came to know that God needs the companionship of every member of his family, and God requires the cooperation of every human being. The individual is indispensable to God, far more precious than sparrows or sheep. In his own image God created man and endowed him with every faculty required as a good member of his household.

Thus Jesus recognized people as temples of God, sacred shrines, holy altars, dwelling places of the Eternal Spirit. All people of all races and tongues and conditions, good people and not-so-good people, prodigal sons and dutiful sons, were recognized as precious to God. He saw "that of God in every man."

Jesus' sensitivity to people, his appreciativeness and considerateness, caused him to delight in sharing with his brethren. He went about doing good, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowful, forgiving the sinful, teaching with wonderful words of life. He came to know that self-centeredness is death, and that sharing is life indeed. He wept over the people because he recognized them. Could any commentary on our own age be more tragic than the reminder that by millions Jesus is dismissed as being too visionary and impractical?

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

He came to be known as "the wisest American," yet at graduation from Harvard he ranked exactly half way in his class, and was chosen class poet only after seven others had declined the honor. Not one of his professors prophesied greatness for him.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in 1803 and lived until 1882. The blood of seven generations of clergymen flowed in his veins. His schooling began early. Just before he became three, his father recorded the fact: "Ralph does not read very well yet." At eight, however, he could read parts of Homer and Virgil in original Greek and Latin, and could repeat from memory considerable passages from Shakespeare and Milton. He was graduated from Harvard at eighteen. He taught for three years before entering Cambridge Divinity School. Lung affliction compelled him to go South. He was also troubled with his eyes. He managed to finish his seminary course, and for a while served as a minister. His beautiful young wife died of tuberculosis. He resigned from the church because of unorthodox views, and at the age of twenty-nine abruptly changed his life.

A trip to Europe brought him in contact with Carlyle and opened for him a new world of thought and purpose. He returned to the United States, married again, and settled down in Concord to the life of writing and lecturing. For forty years when at home he rarely deviated from the routine of spending seven hours in study and writing, from six in the morning until one o'clock. His evenings were devoted to conversation with an ever-widening circle of friends.

Through his articles, essays, poems, books, lectures, and conversations, Emerson became the most invigorating individual in all the land. His influence has widened through the years, and his works have been translated into all the languages of Europe, and published widely in the Orient.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The campus of the school is fifteen miles long and ten miles wide, embracing thirty-five thousand acres. It all came about this way. Captain Berry deeded to his daughter Martha the old home place near Rome, Georgia. He admonished her to keep the land, because some day it would be very valuable. But this young woman of privilege and culture became so interested in the education of mountain children that she in turn deeded her land to a school which she founded.

Martha Berry was born in 1866 and died in 1942. Her idea of founding a school first came to her as the result of reading Bible stories on Sunday afternoon to a group of children from the neighborhood. They were simply starving for knowledge and eagerly devoured her stories. In 1902 she started a tiny school on her farm. This grew until it taxed her financial resources to the limit. Then she went to New York to raise money for its expansion. Through the years she received large gifts and was able to expand until a thousand students were enrolled in the Martha Berry Schools. Now there are ten thousand graduates scattered all over the South.

In 1924 the Georgia State Legislature bestowed on her the title of Distinguished Citizen of the State. The next year the President of the United States presented to her the Roosevelt Medal for Distinguished Social Service. Honorary degrees were given to her by leading universities. In a nationwide poll she was voted one of the twelve greatest American women.

All her life Martha Berry was haunted by the frustration and tragedy of mountain children. Once she arrived too late. She had gone to the mountain home of Lorette to enroll her in school. She arrived just after the beautiful fourteen-year old girl had run away and married. When Martha Berry found the young wife, she was met with the cry, "I wish't you'd of come sooner."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

. BY KIRBY PAGE

That every honest Englishman should enjoy a standard of living equal to that of prisoners in English jails was considered Utopian in the year 1890. In that year William Booth published his famous book, "In Darkest England and the Way Out." The maximum degree of optimism expressed was the hope that the day would come when "every worker on English soil will always be as warmly clad, as healthily housed, and as regularly fed as our criminal convicts - but that is not yet." He complained that "more minute, patient, intelligent observation had been devoted to the study of Earthworms" than to the study of the Sunken Section of the British people.

William Booth was born in 1829 and lived until 1912. His wife Catherine was born in the same year and died in 1890. They moved into the slums of East London and founded the Christian Mission, which in 1878 became The Salvation Army. They combined evangelistic meetings with rescue and relief work. Catherine Booth was one of the earliest women to engage in public speaking. She set an example for the many thousands of Salvation Army lassies who were to come after her.

In 1880 the work of The Salvation Army was begun in the United States. It is now operating in ninety-two countries of the earth, and has become a vast network of social services and religious activities. The Christian message is presented in countless street meetings and halls. Because of the conviction that "they serve God best who serve their fellow men," the social service program has been expanded and now includes rescue homes, children's homes, men's industrial homes, employment agencies, homes for the aged, clinics, hospitals, youth centers, summer camps.

This mighty movement which encircles the globe is the lengthened shadows of William Booth and his illustrious wife Catherine, who found their lives as they threw them away in the slums of London.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

. BY KIRBY PAGE

William Lyon Phelps of Yale was one of the greatest teachers of all time because he had developed to such a high degree the art of appreciation. For thirty-three years he was Professor of English Literature. Thousands of students who passed through his classes testify to his ability to awaken their interest, stimulate their minds, and invigorate their lives.

He was born in New Haven near the Yale campus in 1865, and lived until 1943. He came from a distinguished line of ancestors, and all his life was blessed with superior advantages of great variety. Few individuals have ever known so well so many of the great men of their generation as he did.

In the introduction to his autobiography, he writes: "Perhaps the chief source of my happiness lies in my gift of appreciation. I must have been born with it. When I was a child, everything unusual excited me; now that I am old, everything usual has about the same effect." Everything usual! Everything usual excites me! A friend entitled a biography of him "Fellow of Infinite Jest."

William Lyon Phelps enjoyed life; he enjoyed people; he enjoyed teaching; he enjoyed lecturing; he enjoyed writing; he enjoyed great literature; he enjoyed music; he enjoyed the theater; he enjoyed sports; he enjoyed conversation; he enjoyed nature; he enjoyed the Bible and he enjoyed preaching, for he was a Baptist preacher.

President Seymour of Yale said of him: "It is difficult to speak of Billy Phelps except in superlatives. The great purpose of his career was to share with others his own perception of the beauty of literature, of music and of nature. He brought countless persons to realize that at the center of life is the spirit of loving kindness."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

A human skull hanging on a pole at the entrance of the town was the first sight she saw when she arrived to begin her thirty-nine years of labor among the people. A few months before a chief had died, and with him were buried eight slave men, eight slave women, ten girls, ten boys, and four free wives.

The year gold was discovered in California there was born in the home of a drunken shoemaker in Scotland a daughter who has come to be known as Mary Slessor of Calabar. She spent her girlhood and young womanhood in a factory. David Livingstone's death in 1873 produced deep emotion throughout the British Isles and gave tremendous impetus to the missionary movement. Mary Slessor was among those who offered to go for service in Africa, and three years later she sailed for Calabar in Southern Nigeria.

For four decades less one year Mary Slessor lived among these victimized and degraded people. Gin, guns and chains were practically the only articles of commerce bought from outside traders. Infant-icide was a common practice. Witchcraft was prevalent. Justice was sought by the test of ordeal, innocence or guilt being determined by the use of burning oil or poison.

In the places where she lived there were not many white people, and for months at a time she labored at advance stations where she saw only black skins. She lived among these primitive people as a friend, teacher, preacher, peacemaker. From her Bible she brought a message about the love of God and the love of Christ.

Tribal wars and internal conflicts were frequent, and many times Mary Slessor faced extreme danger. Yet the fact is that in all those long years she was never molested. She was a living illustration of the mighty transforming power of lovingkindness when embodied in utter selflessness and sheer courage.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

He had a genius for the life of blindness. Thus Henry Fawcett was described. He was born in 1833, and at the time of his death in 1884 was Postmaster-General of Great Britain.

At the age of twenty-five, he was stricken with total blindness as the result of an accident. He and his father were hunting quail. His father was a good shot, but had poor eyesight. Failing to see Henry, he fired, brought down the bird, but stray shot pierced both eyes of his son.

Henry Fawcett resolved immediately to live a normal life to the utmost degree possible. He refused to be sorry for himself. Walking, swimming, skating, horseback riding were continued. To a high degree he maintained a cheerful attitude.

Previously as a student at Cambridge University, he had determined to enter Parliament. In this resolve he never wavered, and at the age of thirty-two was elected as a Liberal member. He soon became an outstanding figure. Three inches taller than six feet, with a huge head, a booming voice, dark glasses to hide his sightless eyes, he was a formidable opponent in debate.

In 1880 Gladstone appointed Henry Fawcett at Postmaster-General. He proved to be an efficient administrator and made many improvements in the postal service. He introduced the parcel post, money orders, and postal savings.

He was active in the movement to improve the conditions of the blind. By his own attitudes and achievements, he was a dynamic stimulus to the afflicted. Adversity had forged his resoluteness, strengthened his courage, quickened his intellect, made more vivid his memory, and increased the power of his personality. In addressing a meeting of blind people, he thundered out: "Do not wall us up in institutions, but let us live as other men live."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

· BY KIRBY PAGE

Embarrassment caused Phillips Brooks to enter the Episcopal Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia. He had made such a miserable failure of his work in Boston that he could no longer face his friends.

The future bishop was born in 1835, and died at the early age of fifty-eight. He came from a long line of distinguished ancestors on both sides of the family. At the age of fifteen he entered Harvard, and was graduated with an average record. He then accepted a position as teacher in the highly select Boston Latin School. Within four months he resigned, because of inability to maintain order in his classes. His father sadly wrote in the record: "The task was too much for Phillips and he is now looking for work."

For months Phillips shunned his friends, so keen was his mortification. Suddenly he dropped out of sight, and word reached Boston that he had entered the seminary in Virginia. Prior to his failure, he had never made a conscious or public commitment of his life to Christ and had not thought seriously about becoming a minister.

After graduation he became rector of the Church of the Advent in Philadelphia, at the age of twenty-four. A decade later he began his famous ministry at Trinity Church in Boston, which lasted for twenty-two years. In 1891 he was elected Bishop of Massachusetts.

Six feet, four inches in height, Phillips Brooks was huge in size, with a massive head. All accounts agree that he possessed winsomeness of personal charm, warmth of kindly spirit, and compassionate concern for individuals. His own spiritual experience ran deep. He preached with simplicity and fervor, and wielded a mighty influence over those who heard him. From failure as a teacher, he rose to the pinnacle of the foremost preacher in the land. And millions are indebted to him for his Christmas song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

. BY KIRBY PAGE

The study and enjoyment of birds was increased immeasurably by the work of John James Audubon. He was born in 1785 in Haiti, his father being a Frenchman and his mother a creole. He was educated in France, where he studied art. In 1804 he came to Pennsylvania. Much of his time was spent in observing and drawing birds. At the age of twenty-three, he married Lucy Bakewell and during the next eighteen years they lived chiefly in Kentucky.

Audubon was too much of a naturalist to make a success of the drygoods business. Long excursions into the wilderness and absorption in his painting of birds wrecked several business enterprises. At various times he eked out a livelihood by teaching music and dancing, portrait painting, stuffing wild animals. So inadequate was the support provided his family that his wife became a teacher and for years was the chief financial supporter of the family. She was in complete sympathy with his chief absorption and gave him every encouragement to persist in his ambition to complete the painting of the birds of America.

His explorations and observations carried him to Louisiana and Texas, and from Florida as far north as Labrador. By 1826 he had made more than four hundred paintings of birds which he knew to be of excellence. Being unable to find a publisher in Philadelphia or New York, he sailed for the British Isles. He was befriended by Sir Walter Scott, elected a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the King of England became one of his patrons. An engraver of great skill reproduced the bird pictures and they were published during the years 1827-1838. Later a smaller edition of "Birds of America" was published in the United States. Now more than six million boys and girls have enrolled in Audubon Junior Clubs.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Five hundred years and more before the beginning of the Christian era, in north India at the foot of the Himalya mountains, there was born a prince called Siddhartha, with the family name of Gautama. In time he came to be known as the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

Siddhartha grew up in extreme luxury. His parents shielded him from all that was ugly and disagreeable. He married and lived as a prince until the age of twenty-nine. Outside the palace walls he encountered sickness, old age, and death. A mood of despondency settled upon him at the thought that he also would fall sick, get old, and die.

Abandoning his wife and child, forsaking the life of luxury, he set forth in search of a way of escape from the pains of life. Wandering as an ascetic, he sought wisdom in many places. Finally, under a famous bo-tree, he received illumination. He reached the conviction that the extinction of desire itself is required if pain is to be avoided. How to cease desiring became his problem, how to enter into the bliss of Nirvana, the joy of non-existence.

His answer came in the form of the Noble Eightfold Path to Nirvana. 1. Right views, freedom from delusion. 2. Right aims, to achieve Nirvana. 3. Right speech, truth. 4. Right conduct, honesty and purity. 5. Right living, hurting no living thing. 6. Right effort to self-control. 7. Right-mindedness, mental alertness. 8. Right meditation, rapturous contemplation of life.

The Buddha lived until the age of eighty, and developed a character of compassion and love, purity and nobility. He wrote nothing, but in the course of time his teachings became the basis of Buddhism, which, one writer says, "has done more to civilize mankind than any other movement except Christianity."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The original Quaker was put in jail eight times. The name Quakers was first used as a term of derision by a magistrate because George Fox called upon him "to tremble in the name of the Lord." During that early period 15,000 members of the Society of Friends were imprisoned, 450 of whom suffered death because of this punishment.

George Fox was born in 1624 in England, and lived until the age of sixty-seven. Three hundred years ago religion in the British Isles had reached a low stage of vitality. The message of the pulpit was legalistic and lifeless, without power to transform the individual or society. George was by nature serious and contemplative. Long passages of the Bible he committed to memory. Dissatisfied with the state of the churches, he began at the age of nineteen wandering around the land seeking insight and power. Four years later he had found a message and launched into the itinerant ministry which he continued until his death in 1691.

His gospel was the direct accessibility of God to the human spirit. In every man is "that of God." The inner light enables him to discover the will of God for his life. No salaried ministry was employed by the Friends, and they did not observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They met together in silent meetings of worship, members speaking as they felt led by the Spirit. The Friends refused to take oaths in court, and they would not doff their hats as a token of respect for a "superior." They refused to accept military service, and would not engage in war. They were resolute non-conformists.

George Fox was a powerful man physically, with great capacities of endurance. He was gifted with an appealing personality, and became a preacher of magnetic force. The religious movement which he began has come to be one of the most vital elements in the life of the world today.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

What is the most important work that any man can do on this earth? Surely the answer is this: to help individuals to enter into a life of glorious comradeship with the living God and to devote themselves to the doing of his holy will in selfless service to other persons. Such a work was mightily done by Dwight L. Moody. It has been said of him that he "was an immense, magnificent agency for bringing men to God," and that he "was the greatest single influence for religion in the nineteenth century."

Dwight L. Moody was born in Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1837, and died in 1899. In 1856 he went to Chicago and became a seller of shoes. So successful was he that at the age of twenty-three he had saved \$7,000. But two years later he retired from business in order to devote his full time to religious work.

He quickly became one of the most effective of all Sunday School workers and as a lay evangelist. He was never ordained as a minister, but became increasingly successful as an evangelist. His worldwide reputation was achieved in revival meetings held in the British Isles from 1873 to 1875, with Ira D. Sankey as his singing evangelist. They returned to the United States and were greeted with immense audiences wherever they went. Anywhere, any time, they drew people. Down to the last of his evangelistic meetings in Kansas City during the year of his death, Moody's incalculable power over audiences never diminished.

Moody was a self-educated man, in the sense that he had little formal schooling and that he was "magnificently ignorant" of the world's great literature. His life was narrow, but deep. He lived with God, he loved God, he did the will of God as he understood it. The passion of his life was to win men and women, boys and girls, to God. And here he was unsurpassed in the entire century.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

In order to reach his grave you must climb high on Mount Vaea in Samoa. Robert Louis Stevenson died in 1894 at the age of forty-four. From childhood he was afflicted with a terrible cough and incipient tuberculosis.

Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. His father and grandfather were famous engineers. His mother was the daughter of a clergyman. The family means were ample and provided for a nurse, tutor and much travel in search of health. When it was found that his health would not enable him to follow the profession of engineering, he turned to law and was admitted to the bar, but never practiced. His first and last interest was literature.

He wrote incessantly and voluminously, essays, travel narratives, poetry, plays, novels. Worldwide fame came from the publication in 1882 of "Treasure Island," and four years later from "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Articles and books poured in a steady stream from his pen.

All this represents a supreme triumph of the spirit. Day by day, year after year, he was struggling to keep alive. He labored with the consciousness that any day might be his last one on this earth. Listen to his own words: "For years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed and written out of it, written in haemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness."

In 1888 he and his wife set out for the South Seas in search of health and adventure. They cruised so extensively and Stevenson observed so closely that he became an authority on the life of the people. The end came suddenly, from a broken blood vessel in his brain. His life is a monument to the ability of the human spirit to triumph over the body.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The most glowing personality of the long list of notable women in the nineteenth century is the estimate placed upon Frances Willard by a biographer. She has been honored with a memorial statue in the nation's Capitol, and with a special United States postage stamp.

Frances Elizabeth Willard was born in 1839 and died in 1898. After teaching school in New York and Illinois, she was chosen President of the Ladies College, at Evanston, and later became Dean of the Woman's College of Northwestern University. She resigned in 1874, to become President of the Chicago branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and Corresponding Secretary for the national organization.

She was interested in the entire movement for the emancipation of women. The course of her life was changed by experiences gained in Europe during two years of travel and study, financed by the father of her most intimate friend. The cost of her tour was six thousand dollars, and rarely has an investment produced bigger dividends for humanity.

Frances Willard became the most powerful and magnetic speaker produced by the women's movement. She was the tireless organizer of the mightiest women's organization of the century. She spoke in practically every city of ten thousand population in the country, and traveled thirty-five thousand miles a year, in a day when travel was slower, more difficult and less comfortable. From 1879 until her death, she was elected President of the W. C. T. U. each year.

Her work for temperance was part of her passion to liberate women. From 1876 she was a foremost advocate of woman suffrage and did more to win adherents among conservative church women than any other suffragist leader. She won the affection and released the energies of uncounted thousands of women throughout the land.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Slavery was looked upon as a divine institution when William Lloyd Garrison was born in 1805. From the Bible many texts were quoted to demonstrate that slavery was God's own idea and was given to man as an instrument of mercy for the slave and for the owner. The argument was advanced that Negroes by nature are inferior and need masters to provide for them. An idea often repeated was that slaves were brought as heathen from the jungle and converted to Christianity.

Few words from an editorial have ever been quoted so frequently as those used by Garrison in his first one in "The Liberator," on January 1, 1831: "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation. I am in earnest - I will not equivocate - I will not excuse - I will not retreat a single inch - and I will be heard." And he was heard. The circulation of his paper was small, but it was widely quoted. It has been said that if a drop of abolitionism fell anywhere in the United States, it was soon flowing through "The Liberator." For three momentous decades, Garrison thundered and "lightninged" without cessation.

There is no doubt that Garrison infuriated the South. Equally, there is no doubt that more than any other one man he created a moral revulsion against the buying and selling and holding of human beings as chattel slaves. Contrast could hardly be sharper than the methods of Garrison and John Woolman the Quaker. Instead of loving persuasion of owners to set at liberty their slaves, unrestrained vituperation was the procedure of Garrison. Garrison's rejoinder was that intense heat is required to melt icebergs of indifference and inaction.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

We are living in an entirely different world than it would have been if Saul of Tarsus had never been born. The thinking and the feeling and the actions of an innumerable throng of human beings around the earth have been mightily affected by Christianity, and Saul became the greatest of the Christians. The human mind cannot envisage the world as it would now be if there had been no Christianity, and there is no way of finding out what Christianity would have become if Saul had not been transformed into Paul the Apostle.

Consider the way Paul dominates the New Testament. He wrote one-fourth of it and greatly influenced the Greek physician who wrote another quarter of it, so that half of it is due to him. The subsequent history of the Church reveals the power of Paul. Augustine and Luther and Wesley are three of the greatest figures of the Church, and all of them were inspired and transformed by the impact of Paul upon their lives.

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is one of the greatest passages in literature. As long as the printed word is preserved, men will read: "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

By every test Paul was an extraordinary personality. The Thessalonians said of him and Silas that the men who "turned the world upside down" have come here also. Wherever he went, he kindled conflagrations. He became one of the most widely traveled men of the day. In himself he combined the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, the Christian. He won converts and he founded churches. He was guide of the early church fathers, and to this day more books are written about him than all the other apostles combined. Ask your librarian for "The Character of Paul," by Charles E. Jefferson, and "Paul the Dauntless," by Basil Mathews, and your conviction will be deepened that Paul is one of the truly great men of the ages.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

· BY KIRBY PAGE

For four weeks I traveled constantly with a saint in politics. He was at that time seventy-seven years of age. We were engaged in a strenuous crusade for world peace. The spirit he displayed throughout enabled me to understand why "G. L." was the most beloved member of the House of Commons.

George Lansbury was born in 1859 and died in 1940. From early childhood, he was accustomed to privation and hard work. He shovelled coal, worked on the stone pile, drove a truck for a meat packing plant, ran several small businesses, became a Guardian of the Poor, mayor of the borough of Poplar in London. The first time he was Labor candidate for the House of Commons, he received only 347 votes. Not until his sixth attempt did he succeed in winning a seat. After two years his strong support of woman suffrage caused his defeat. Then for a decade he was editor of the "Daily Herald," organ of the Labor Party. He was re-elected to Parliament in 1922. From 1931 to 1935 he was chairman of the Labor Party.

Two passions of his life were the ending of poverty and the prevention of war. He was opposed to war and violent revolution, and strongly committed to representative government. Opposition to the Boer War brought persecution upon him. He looked upon the system of imperialism as the primary cause of international warfare. He stood not only against German and French imperialism, but against British imperialism also and more vigorously.

For thirty-five years George Lansbury devoted his week-ends to speaking engagements throughout the British Isles. Without payment he spoke on Saturday night and three times on Sunday. Later he wrote: "Our meetings were like revival gatherings. We were very happy in those days. Somehow our hearts kept young. We worked and looked for a future which would be bright for us and for others."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

All of us are deeper in debt than we can possibly realize. Many a man is alive today who would have died in agony if it had not been for the discoveries made by a French scientist Louis Pasteur. Hydrophobia was an incurable disease when he began his researches. Anthrax was taking a terrible toll of man and beast. Diphtheria was choking to death many children. Countless mothers were the victims of child-birth fever.

Louis Pasteur was born in 1822 and died in 1895. In school he was known as a plodder. More brilliant pupils learned more quickly and received higher grades. Louis seems to have been born with a question mark in his mind. Why, what, how were his constant exclamations. He became absorbed in chemistry and was obsessed with desire to experiment. Well equipped laboratories for college students were non-existent. He was permitted to use a professor's crude private equipment. When he became dean of the faculty of science at Lille he opened to students the first chemical laboratory in all France.

To Louis Pasteur, more than to any other individual, we are indebted for knowledge as to the part played by germs in causing diseases in men and animals. And he was a pioneer in developing vaccines which made possible immunization against diseases. Patiently he isolated germs and experimented with ways of destroying their virulence. He was first to discover that fermentation is itself an active microorganism. To him, of course, is due the science of the pasturization of milk. He was first in pointing out the importance of sterilizing surgical instruments. At the age of sixty-two, he began the five-year study of hydrophobia which resulted in his famous discovery of a way to immunize victims of bites from dogs infected with rabies. This plodding youth became one of the great benefactors of the human race.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

One of the deepest cries ever to come from the human soul was this fervent exclamation from St. Augustine: "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee."

Augustine was born in 354 in Tagaste, North Africa, in a province now part of Algeria, forty-two years after the Roman Emperor Constantine had accepted Christianity. His saintly mother Monica has become a symbol of the nobility of motherhood. His father, until he became a Christian late in his life, was a lusty pagan. Through the support of a wealthy friend, Augustine was able to study in Carthage, the gay Paris of the time, where he later said "debauchery bubbled round me like a frying-pan." He formed an irregular union with a nameless young woman, with whom he lived for thirteen years, and who bore him a son. With this heritage and experience, it is easy to understand Augustine's prayer in later life: "Lord, make me holy, but not just yet."

At the age of thirty-three he was genuinely converted to Christianity, and baptized on Easter Eve, 387. Four years later he was ordained to the ministry. In 397 he became auxiliary bishop of Hippo, and soon after became the bishop. He became the foremost theologian of Christendom, and wrote voluminously.

His "Confessions" became one of the most influential books ever published. It has been said that this is the first genuine autobiography in all literature. It is an utterly frank record of the searchings of a human soul after God. It is characterized throughout by a sense of deep humility. If a saint is "an enthusiast for goodness, one who enjoys holiness as the artist enjoys beauty," the Bishop of Hippo deserves to be known as Saint Augustine. Next only to St. Paul, he became the most influential figure in the history of the Christian Church.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The greatest Presidents of the United States, who were they? About first and second ranking there is general agreement: Washington and Lincoln. Millions of Americans give their third choice to Woodrow Wilson.

The twenty-eighth President of the United States was born in 1856, the year the Crimean War Ended. He was five years old when the Civil War began, and he was elected President about two years before the First World War began. He was born in Staunton, Virginia, where his father was a Presbyterian minister. He was graduated from Davidson College, Princeton University, the Law School of the University of Virginia, and Johns Hopkins University. He practiced law in Atlanta just one year, and then taught at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan and Princeton. In 1902 he was elected President of Princeton University, and in 1910 he became Governor of New Jersey.

Five elements combined to lift Woodrow Wilson to the pinnacle of greatness. First was his religious training and experience, from which he gained high ideals and a resolute sense of duty. Second, he moved forward with a fervent belief in democracy, he trusted the people and sought to remove obstructions which prevented them from governing themselves. Third, he looked upon nations as servants of mankind, rather than as instruments of provincial advantage. Fourth, he saw clearly the need of international agencies of justice and co-operation, and gave himself unreservedly to the formation of the League of Nations. Fifth, he possessed robust faith in moral and spiritual forces as determining factors in international affairs.

Few statesmen in history have ever moved so deeply so many millions of people as were stirred by the words of Woodrow Wilson. If world peace is ever to be achieved, mankind must follow the road pointed out by this idealist in politics.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

In the Holy Bible there is recorded progressive understanding of the character of God. Amos is the earliest writer to emphasize the justice of God. He presents religion in terms of morality. Hosea emphasizes the love of God, Isaiah the holiness of the Eternal, Jeremiah the place of the individual in the sight of God, Second Isaiah the power of vicarious sacrifice in God's plan.

Hosea began his work about a decade after Amos hurled his proclamation of doom. The Book of Hosea abounds in symbolism and is therefore difficult to interpret at this distance and in our modern setting. Its central message, however, is clear. God loves his wayward children, even as a devoted husband loves his wife even though she becomes a prostitute.

Two interpretations are placed upon the text. One is that after Hosea had married Gomer and she had borne him a child, his wife became a common street-walker. In his undying love for her, Hosea sought her, reclaimed her, brought her back home as his wife.

Other scholars maintain that Gomer remained faithful to Hosea, and that he, in order to symbolize dramatically Israel's impending loss of king and prince, purchased a prostitute for the price of an ordinary slave and kept her in seclusion for a long time.

Two aspects of the Book of Hosea are clear: his denunciation of the sins of the nation, and his proclamation of the everlasting love of God even for his unfaithful children. Here are the words Hosea puts on the lips of God: "How can I give thee up, O Ephraim! how can I give thee over, O Israel. My heart asserts itself, my sympathies are all aglow. I will not carry into effect the fierceness of my anger; I will not turn to destroy Ephraim. For God am I, and not man, holy in the midst of thee, therefore I will not consume."

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Can you name a man who rose higher from lower down than Booker T. Washington? His achievement was to climb from the cradle of a slave to the acclamation of a nation.

He was born about seven years before the Civil War ended. His father was a white man and his mother a mulatto slave woman. After emancipation he worked in salt furnace and coal mines. Early he developed a thirst for education, and finally was able to enter Hampton Institute, working as a janitor for his expenses. After teaching in West Virginia for three years, he was called back to Hampton as an instructor.

Two years later he became Principal of a normal school-to-be at Tuskegee, Alabama. No buildings had been erected, and no funds were in sight when Mr. Washington arrived on the spot. They began in a run-down shanty, with thirty pupils, some of them nearly forty years old. An abandoned farm of a thousand acres was bought for \$500, half of the money being obtained through a loan. The economic conditions of the people, white and black, were pitiable, only sixteen years after the ending of the Civil War. Booker T. Washington saw that the only hope was in work, hard work, long continued on the part of liberated slaves who had been taught by their experiences to despise manual labor. He set the example as principal of the school by shouldering his axe and heading the procession of students who cleared the farm.

The years of struggle to keep the school alive, to keep out of the hands of the sheriff for debt, constitute a record of devotion and fortitude unbounded. Mr. Washington developed great gifts as an orator, an executive, and a money raiser. Today Tuskegee Institute is one of the foremost educational institutions of the United States, the lengthened shadow of a slave child grown to the heroic proportions of a great American.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

The Matterhorn among the great is the way Leo Tolstoy was once described. Universally recognized as one of the greatest writers of all time, "he is now among the world's classics." In his lifetime he was looked upon as "the conscience of Europe."

Leo Tolstoy was born in 1828 and lived until 1910. His mother was a Russian princess and his father was a nobleman. Included in the estate which he inherited were three hundred and thirty "male souls" or serfs and four thousand acres of land. After a period in the army, he retired to the dissipated life of a Russian nobleman. At the age of thirty-four, he married the daughter of a German doctor. From this union came thirteen children.

At an early age Tolstoy displayed remarkable literary talent. His great novel "War and Peace" was published serially during the period 1865-1869. Then came "Anna Karenina" in 1875-1877. These novels brought him acclamation from all over the earth.

Not until he was fifty-one did he come into a satisfying spiritual experience. The Sermon on the Mount suddenly became the center of his thought. Its message of lovingkindness and non-violence was accepted as the basis of his own life. As he became increasingly aware of the contrasts between Christian teaching and the practices of Christians, he sought to simplify his own life and to follow the precepts of primitive Christianity. His vigorous criticism of organized religion brought about his excommunication by the Russian Church. His continuing attacks upon the state and the evils of modern civilization would have led to his exile by the Czar had it not been for his worldwide popularity. His works have been translated into most languages and his influence has gone forth to the ends of the earth.

G O D ' S L I V I N G L E T T E R S

BY KIRBY PAGE

Mending kettles and pans was his source of livelihood, but the time came when he was called "the greatest religious genius of the English race."

John Bunyan was born in 1628, and lived to the age of sixty. Among his contemporaries were Cromwell, Milton, George Fox and William Penn. His father was a tinker, and John followed in this semi-respectable trade. For a time he was a soldier, and his later writings abound in military metaphors.

When he married, his wife brought with her a dowry of two books, The Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs. John's conversion came from reading the Bible. He soon began preaching with great power, although poorly educated. His ministry was interrupted by the persecution of dissenters which began in 1660. Bunyan refused to attend the state church. He refused to stop his work as a non-conformist preacher. He was thrown into Bedford jail, where he was confined for twelve years, in a cell only eight and a half feet high.

While in prison, Bunyan wrote nine books, including the masterpiece, "Pilgrim's Progress." This book was destined to become the most widely read of all books except the Bible. It has been translated into practically all languages, and has maintained its high place in English literature for nearly three hundred years. It has been said that "this allegory of an ordinary man making his way to heaven is one of the most influential books in western civilization."

In 1950 a biographer said of John Bunyan: "He is the individual who established, through political confusion and religious persecution, the right to maintain a direct relationship between himself and God. To him we owe that freedom of worship which the English-speaking world, unlike other nations of our day, has never forfeited."